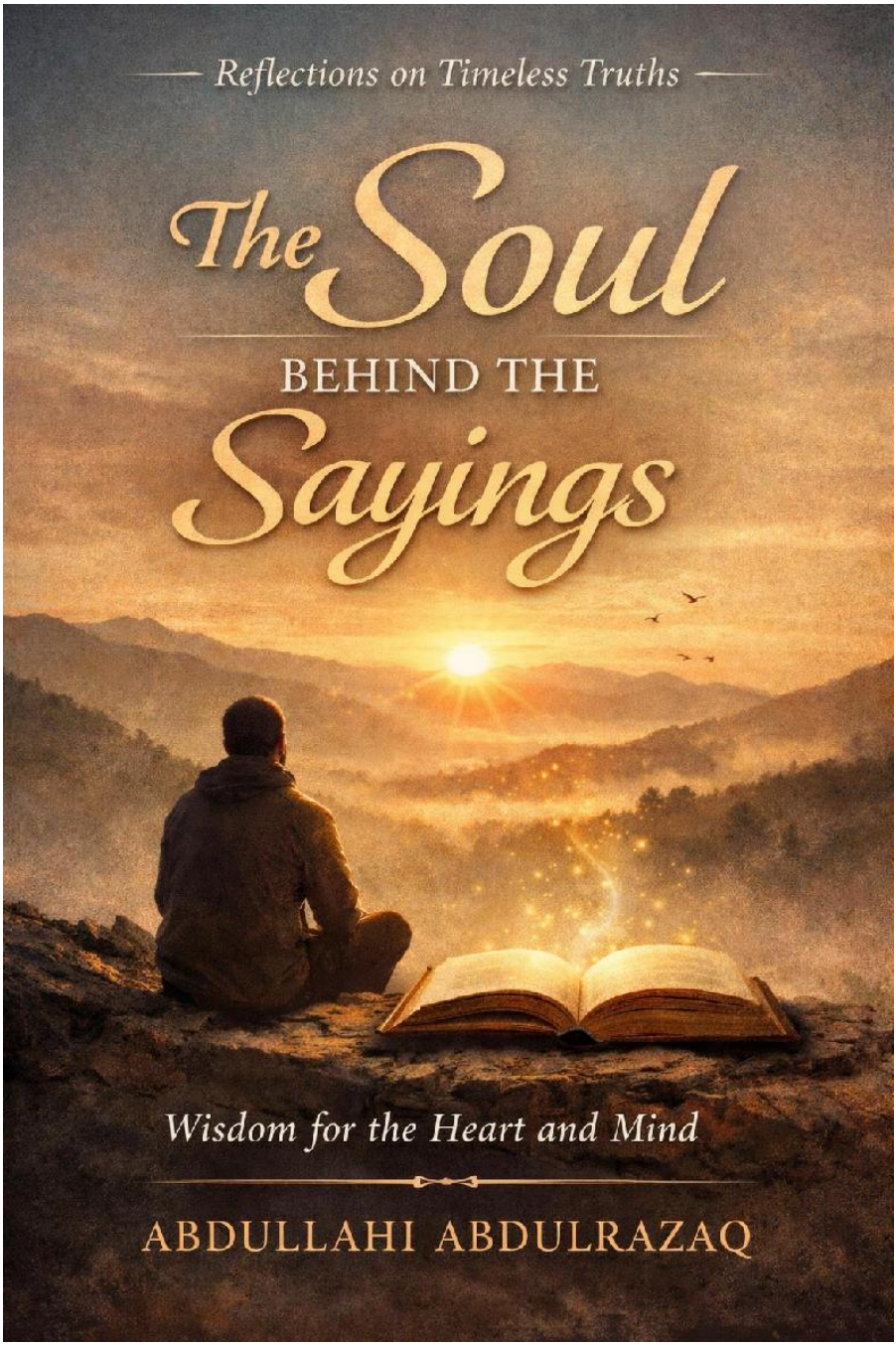

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The Soul Behind the Sayings

by **Abdullahi Abdulrazaq**

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Dedication

This book is dedicated

to those who pause in a noisy world,

to those who question what is given,

and to anyone quietly searching for meaning

behind the words we repeat every day.

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Preface

Words shape how we understand life. Long before we question them, many sayings are already part of our thinking, passed down, repeated, and accepted as truth. Yet, not all words are meant to be memorized; some are meant to be examined.

This book is a personal reflection on popular sayings not to dismiss

them, but to look beneath their surface. Each saying carries an idea, and behind every idea is an assumption about life, happiness, success, pain, love, and purpose. My aim here is not to redefine these sayings authoritatively, but to explore what they may truly mean when examined honestly and quietly.

The reflections in this book are not instructions, and they are not absolute truths. They are thoughts shaped by observation, experience, and reflection. You may agree with some, disagree with others, or find yourself somewhere in between. All responses are valid.

This book is best read slowly. Each section stands on its own, inviting pause rather than urgency. If a reflection causes you to stop and think, even briefly then it has served its purpose.

Ultimately, this work is an invitation: to look beyond familiar words, to question gently, and to discover the deeper meanings we often overlook in everyday life.

THE SOUL BEHIND THE SAYINGS

1. **Money can’t buy happiness.”**

We say “money can’t buy happiness” not because money is worthless, but because happiness is not a commodity. You cannot purchase it, store it, or own it. Happiness is an event of the soul, a momentary alignment of feeling and meaning. It visits, it departs; it is more like weather than property. Money can certainly arrange the conditions for joy, comfort, security, memorable experiences and in that way, it can invite happiness in more often. But it cannot lock the door against sorrow. Sadness is not a financial liability; it is a human inevitability. To believe otherwise is to confuse temporary comfort with eternal peace. True wealth, then, may not be in accumulating what can be

bought, but in cultivating what can only be felt and felt again, even after loss.

2. **“Health is wealth.”**

We cal health “wealth” not as a metaphor, but as a correction of priorities.

Money can buy pil ows for a restless head, but not sleep. It can afford the finest food, but not appetite. It can purchase care, but not vitality. When the body falters or the mind grows cloudy, every other possession dims into background noise. What use is a golden watch if you lack the strength to lift your wrist? True wealth is not measured in accounts, but in capacities: the ability to wake without pain, to move without dread, to think without fog, to experience a day as a gift rather than a sentence. Guard your health not as an asset, but as the very ground upon which al other assets stand.

3. **“Time is money.”**

“Time is money” is perhaps the most dangerous half-truth we tell ourselves.

Yes, both are limited resources. But money can be borrowed, earned back, and inherited. Time cannot. Once a moment passes, it is gone forever, not into some cosmic bank, but into the irreversible past. The phrase should real y be: **Time is life.** How we spend our hours is how we spend our existence.

Wasting time, then, is not a financial miscalculation; it is a spiritual one. This saying shouldn’t just hustle us to work faster, but invite us to live more deliberately, to ask, “Is this how I wish to spend my life?”

4. **“All that glitters is not gold.”**

We live in an age of glitter, of polished images, instant success, and dazzling

surfaces. This ancient proverb is a quiet rebellion against that glare. It reminds us that true value often wears plain clothes. A person’s character, a love’s depth, a purpose’s sincerity, these do not shout.

They resonate. The glitter of social approval, luxury without meaning, or fame without substance is a kind of poverty dressed in light. The saying is a cal to discernment: to look past the shine and seek the substance, to value the quiet weight of truth over the noisy lightness of appearance.

5. **“The grass is always greener on the other side.”**

This proverb speaks to a restlessness deep in the human heart, the belief that fulfil ment lives just beyond our fence. Yet, when we cross over, we often find different weeds, a different shade of green. The il usion isn’t in the other side’s beauty, but in our own perception. We compare our behind-the-scenes to everyone else’s highlight reel. The true lesson isn’t to stop looking over the fence, but to learn to tend to our own grass with the same curiosity and care we imagine others do. Contentment grows not from finding a perfect lawn, but from learning to appreciate the soil, the sun, and the seasons of your own patch of earth.

6. **“You reap what you sow.”**

This is the universe’s quiet law of return. Our actions are seeds, some sprout quickly, others lie dormant for seasons, but the soil of life does not forget.

Sow kindness, and you may not always see the immediate bloom, but you cultivate a garden within and around you. Sow carelessness or harm, and the harvest wil come, often in a form you did not anticipate. The saying is not a threat, but a profound reminder of our agency: we are, every day, planting the landscape of our future.

7. **“Actions speak louder than words.”**

Words are sketches of intent; actions are the finished portrait. Anyone can promise, but only doing reveals true character. A lifetime of “I love you” is hollow without consistent care; grand philosophies are empty without practiced principles. This saying teaches us to listen with our eyes, to measure people, and ourselves, by the footsteps they leave behind, not the echoes they create.

8. **“What goes around comes around.”**

Life has a rhythm of return, a moral gravity that pul s our deeds back to us. It's not mystical punishment, but the natural result of living in a connected world.

The energy we send out—be it compassion or contempt—ripples through the

web of relationships and circumstances, often finding its way back to our shore. It is less a warning and more an invitation: to be mindful of the quality of the circle you are helping to create.

9. **"You don't know what you have until it's gone."**

Presence has a way of becoming invisible. The familiar, the reliable, the everyday, these are the pil ars we lean on but rarely see. It is often in the empty space left behind that we final y perceive the shape of what was truly holding us up. This saying is a plea for conscious appreciation, a cal to see the gifts in our hands before life asks for them back.

10. **"Silence is golden."**

In a world addicted to noise, silence is a rare currency. It is not merely the absence of sound, but a space for presence, to listen, to absorb, to understand. Not every thought needs a voice; not every truth needs immediate declaration. There is a wisdom in restraint, a strength in knowing when your peace is more valuable than your point. Silence can be the most profound thing we offer, both to others and to ourselves.

11. **"Rome was not built in a day."**

We invoke Rome to remember that anything of enduring substance, a skil , a relationship, a life's purpose is the work of countless unseen days. Impatience is the enemy of depth. This saying is a gentle rebuke to the age of instant results, a reminder that true building is slow, deliberate, and often invisible. It's not a cal to procrastinate, but to persevere: lay your bricks faithful y, even when you cannot yet see the skyline.

12. **"Honesty is the best policy."**

Honesty earns its title not because it is easy, but because it is light. A lie is a weight you must carry, a story you must maintain, a shadow that dims your inner peace. Truth, even when it stings at first, clears the air and aligns your outer world with your inner reality. This saying isn't about moral superiority; it's about practical freedom, the freedom to live without the exhausting architecture of pretense.

13. **"Practice makes perfect."**

The deeper truth is that practice makes *permanent*, not perfect. Perfection is a horizon, not a destination. What repetition truly builds is neural pathways,

muscle memory, and resilient confidence. It is the daily dialogue between effort and improvement. This saying celebrates the journey of becoming, honoring the humble, unglamorous work that turns aspiration into ability.

14. **"Patience is a virtue."**

Patience is not passive waiting; it is active endurance. It is the wisdom to distinguish between what can be forced and what must be al owed to unfold.

In an instant world, patience is a rebellious act of faith, in processes, in people, and in the timing of a life that often understands more than our urgency permits us to see.

15. **"Hard work pays off."**

The payoff of hard work is not always the trophy you envisioned. Sometimes it is the cal oused hand, the disciplined mind, or the quiet knowledge that you did not waver. This saying is a covenant with effort itself: that the act of striving shapes you into someone capable of receiving success, even if that success arrives in a different form than you expected.

16. **"Experience is the best teacher."**

Advice gives you the map; experience gives you the journey. Some lessons are written in a language only lived moments can translate,

the sting of a mistake, the warmth of earned trust, the resilience forged in failure. This saying honors the visceral curriculum of life, where the deepest wisdom is often written in the ink of action and consequence.

17. **“Slow and steady wins the race.”**

This is not an ode to slowness, but to consistency. Speed is flashy, but stamina is transformative. The relentless drip wears away stone. In a culture that celebrates the sprint, this proverb champions the marathoner’s heart, the understanding that unwavering pace often outlasts frantic bursts, and that true victory is often simply staying in the race.

18. **“Life is short.”**

We say “life is short” not because our days are few, but because our attention is fleeting. Time accelerates when we live on autopilot, when we postpone joy, when we forget that this moment too is life. The saying is a wake-up cal , not to hurry, but to heighten, to infuse our finite days with deliberate presence.

19. **“Nothing lasts forever.”**

This is the bittersweet anchor of reality. Joy, sorrow, youth, hardship, al are guests, not tenants. Knowing this can relieve the pressure of pain: “This too shal pass.” It can also deepen our gratitude for beauty: “This wil not last, so behold it now.” It is a cal to hold everything lightly, but to experience it ful y.

20. **“Tomorrow is not promised.”**

This is not a statement of fear, but of focus. The uncertainty of the future sanctifies the present. It asks us: If this were your last today, how would you fil it? The proverb doesn’t aim to paralyze with anxiety, but to liberate with priority urging us to say the kind word, begin the daunting project, and cherish the ordinary miracle of now.

21. **“You only live once.”**

YOLO is often a license for recklessness. But its true power is as a mandate for responsibility. If this is your only shot, what story do you want to tell? It cal s for courage, yes, but also for conscience. It's not just about seizing the day, but about stewarding your one, irreplaceable life with intention and integrity.

22. **"The truth always comes out."**

Truth has a tenacity that falsehoods lack. Lies require maintenance; they are houses built on fault lines. Truth, even when buried, carries a persistent life within it. This saying is a testament to the unsustainable nature of deception and the profound, often messy, inevitability of revelation.

23. **"Don't judge a book by its cover."**

Every person is a library of unread stories. The cover appearance, first impression, reputation, is a title, not the text. This saying is a plea for curiosity over conclusion, for the humility to admit that we can never know the ful narrative of another's battles, scars, or secret strengths from a glance.

24. **"A friend in need is a friend indeed."**

Fair-weather friendship is a decoration. True friendship is foundation. When the storm hits and the decorations blow away, the foundation remains. This saying recalibrates our understanding of loyalty: it is not measured in shared laughter, but in shared load. The friend who stays in the dark with you is the one who has brought the real light.

25. **"Familiarity breeds contempt."**

Over time, the extraordinary becomes ordinary. The loved one's quirks become annoyances; the blessings become expectations. This proverb is a warning against the numbing power of routine. It urges us to actively fight contempt with fresh eyes, to continual y *choose* to see the wonder in the familiar, lest we lose it to our own neglect

.

26. **“Blood is thicker than water.”**

The bond of family carries a primal weight, a shared history written in DNA and memory. But this saying is a beginning, not an end. It speaks to an innate connection, yet it does not absolve that connection from the requirements of al love: respect, effort, and sometimes, forgiveness. Thickness is not an excuse for toxicity; it is a cal to deeper, more conscious stewardship of the ties that first formed us.

27. **“No pain, no gain.”**

Physical, emotional, intellectual, growth demands a degree of friction. Comfort is the soil of stagnation. This saying isn’t a glorification of suffering, but an acknowledgment of the mechanics of strength. The muscle tears before it rebuilds stronger. The heart breaks before it learns to love more wisely. The gain is not the pain itself, but the resilience and capacity forged within it.

28. **“Every cloud has a silver lining.”**

This is not a command to ignore the storm, but an invitation to look for the physics of light within it. Even the darkest experience can teach, strengthen, or redirect us in ways the sunshine never could. The “silver lining” isn’t a denial of the cloud’s darkness; it’s the stubborn human refusal to let the darkness have the final word.

29. **“Actions have consequences.”**

This is the fundamental grammar of a moral universe. Every choice is a cause set in motion, rippling through the web of reality. Some consequences are immediate, some delayed, some subtle, but none are absent. The saying is the ultimate teacher of accountability: we are not just living our lives; we are authoring effects with every deed

.

30. **“Fortune favors the bold.”**

Not the reckless, but the resolute. Fortune, like opportunity, often dresses in the garb of risk and requires a handshake of courage to be recognized. Those

who dare to step, to ask, to try, to begin, meet a different set of possibilities than those who remain perfectly safe in hesitation. Boldness opens doors that caution politely leaves closed.

31. **“Silence speaks volumes.”**

In the economy of human expression, silence is the most potent currency. It can be a weapon of withdrawal, a sanctuary of peace, or the deepest form of listening. What remains unsaid often carries the truest weight, the pause heavy with meaning, the quiet that fol ows a wound, the shared stil ness that needs no words. This saying reminds us that communication is not merely the transfer of words, but the resonance of the spaces between them.

32. **“Do unto others as you would have them do unto you.”**

This is the golden rule because it is the operating system for a functional heart. It asks for a simple yet profound shift: to see yourself in the other.

Before acting, pause and ask, “If I were standing there, how would I wish to be treated?” It is empathy made practical, a moral compass that requires no scripture other than your own capacity for feeling.

33. **“Life goes on.”**

Spoken often as a cold consolation, this phrase holds a raw and redemptive truth. The world does not stop for our grief, our failure, or our joy. The sun rises, traffic moves, seasons turn. This continuity is not cruelty, but a kind of grace, a pul ing forward by the very current of existence. It teaches that healing is not found in stopping time, but in learning to move with it again.

34. **“Small things matter.”**

We are mesmerized by the grand gesture, the life-altering decision, the monumental achievement. But a life is built in the mortar between the bricks, the daily kindness, the disciplined five minutes, the kept promise. The smal things are the atoms of character and the seeds of legacy. To dismiss them is to misunderstand how a destiny is actual y made.

35. **“Knowledge is power.”**

Not the power to dominate, but the power to navigate. Knowledge il uminates the path, dispels the ghosts of fear, and turns mystery into choice. In a world of manipulation and confusion, to know is to be armored against deceit and empowered toward agency. This saying venerates learning not as an academic exercise, but as the very tool of liberation.

36. **“Nothing worth having comes easy.”**

This is the universe’s gentle filter of value. If it were easy, everyone would have it, and it would cease to be precious. The struggle is not an obstacle to the prize; it is the process that makes the prize meaningful. The earned degree, the mended relationship, the hard-won peace, their worth is inextricably woven with the effort it took to attain them.

37. **“Mistakes make us human.”**

Our errors are the proof of our attempt, the signature of our fal ibility, and the raw material of our growth. To never stumble is to never have walked a chal enging path. This saying is an antidote to the poison of perfectionism, a cal to self-compassion, and a reminder that wisdom is often just the new name we give to our healed wounds.

38. **“The past cannot be changed.”**

A simple, granite fact. We can spend our lives trying to rewrite a book whose ink is dry, or we can accept that the past is prologue, not prison. Its power lies not in what happened, but in what meaning we assign it today. This saying invites us to stop being archaeologists of our own ruins and become architects of our present.

39. **“Let go and move on.”**

The heaviest baggage we carry is often intangible: a grudge, a regret, an old version of ourselves. Letting go is not forgetting; it is unclenching. It is the conscious decision to stop al owing yesterday’s poison to seep into today’s well. Moving on is the act of walking

forward, lighter, into the story that is stil being written.

40. **“One step at a time.”**

The journey of a thousand miles is not conquered by staring at the map, but by focusing on the ground directly before your feet. Overwhelm is the enemy of progress. This saying is the gentle mantra for the anxious, the grieving, and the dreamer, a permission slip to break down the monumental into the manageable, and to find victory in forward motion, however incremental.

41. **“Where there is a will, there is a way.”**

Wil is the engine; the way is the terrain it discovers. This isn’t naive optimism, it’s a statement about the creative force of determined intention. Obstacles

are real, but a resolute wil engages the mind in problem-solving, sees hidden paths, and generates resilience. It’s the difference between seeing a wal and searching for a door.

42. **“Hope keeps us alive.”**

Not just biological y, but spiritual y. Hope is the oxygen of the soul in suffocating circumstances. It is not a guarantee of a specific outcome, but a stubborn belief in the possibility of light. It is the quiet voice that says, “Keep going,” when al evidence suggests otherwise. To hope is to assert that the story is not over.

43. **“Live and let live.”**

This is the minimalist manifesto for peace. It acknowledges the exhausting, futile energy spent in judging, controlling, or resenting the choices of others.

True freedom is found not in getting everyone to agree with you, but in granting them the same sovereignty over their own path that you demand for yours. It is tolerance rooted in self-respect.

44. **“Kindness costs nothing.”**

Yet, paradoxical y, it is among the most valuable currencies in the human economy. A smile, a held door, a moment of genuine listening, these require no material wealth, only a wealth of spirit. This saying rebukes the notion that impact must be expensive. It reminds us that the simplest, most freely given gifts can be the ones that alter a life's trajectory.

45. **"The journey matters more than the destination."**

Because the destination is a moment, but the journey is your life. Who you become, what you see, what you overcome and cherish along the road, these are the substance. The finish line gives a goal, but the miles gift you with strength, stories, and self-knowledge. To fixate only on the endpoint is to miss the very point of traveling.

46. **"Trust takes time to build."**

Trust is not declared; it is constructed, brick by brick, through consistent, reliable action. It is the fragile, precious architecture of relationship. This saying honors the slow, sacred process of proving safety to one another. It warns against the haste that mistakes charisma for character, and it celebrates the sturdy beauty of a bond earned over seasons.

47. **"Fear is a liar."**

Fear speaks in absolutes and catastrophes. It shouts, "You wil fail!" "You are in danger!" "This wil end in disaster!" But fear's voice is not a prophet; it is a guard dog, often overreacting to shadows. This saying invites us to interrogate our fears, to separate the legitimate caution from the paralyzing fiction, and to choose courage not as the absence of fear, but as the decision to act despite its whispers.

48. **"Change is inevitable."**

The only constant is flux. To resist change is to resist the fundamental law of existence, like a tree refusing to shed its leaves in autumn. This saying offers both a warning and a comfort: nothing, good or bad, stays frozen. Our power lies not in stopping the river, but in learning to navigate its currents, and perhaps, in rare moments, to steer.

49. **“Happiness is a choice.”**

This is often misunderstood. It does not mean we can simply switch on joy amidst deep grief or trauma. It means that, within the realm of our ordinary days, our perspective is a dial we can adjust. We can choose to focus on scarcity or abundance, on grievance or gratitude. Happiness, then, is not a condition bestowed by circumstance, but a stance we take toward our life, a practice of attending to the light, even when shadows are present.

50. **“The soul behind the sayings.”**

Proverbs are not just clever arrangements of words; they are vessels. They carry the distil ed wisdom of generations, the laughter, tears, failures, and triumphs of countless souls who came before us. To engage with a saying is not to receive an answer, but to join a long conversation across time. The soul behind them is a collective one, whispering from the past, asking us to listen, reflect, and add our own lived understanding to the eternal stream of meaning.

Author’s Note

This book contains reflections on **fifty familiar sayings** — words many of us have heard repeatedly, often without stopping to question what they truly mean. Rather than treating these sayings as fixed truths, I approached them as invitations to think more deeply about life, human nature, and meaning.

The reflections shared here are personal. They are shaped by observation, experience, and quiet contemplation. They are not meant to instruct, convince, or impose a particular worldview. Instead, they are offered as perspectives — ways of looking beneath the surface of common expressions to uncover the ideas they carry.

Each saying stands on its own. Some may resonate immediately, others may not. That is intentional. Meaning is not something we all arrive at in the same way or at the same time. If even one reflection causes a pause, a question, or a moment of clarity, then this work has fulfilled its purpose.

Ultimately, this book is not about the sayings themselves, but about the thoughts they awaken. It is an encouragement to slow down, to reflect, and to engage more consciously with the words that quietly shape how we understand life.

About the Author

Abdullahi Abdulrazaq

Abdullahi Abdulrazaq is a writer and thinker with a deep interest in philosophy, theology, and the quiet questions that shape human existence.

He holds a Bachelor's degree in Computer Science from Al-Qalam University, Katsina, and a Master's degree in Information Technology from the Nigerian Defence Academy (NDA).

Though trained in technology, his reflections are rooted in human experience, observation, and contemplation.

His writing explores meaning, purpose, love, time, and the assumptions behind everyday beliefs. Rather than offering definitive answers, he invites readers to think more carefully about the ideas they often accept without question.

The Soul Behind the Sayings reflects his belief that wisdom is not always found in complexity, but in paying closer attention to the words and thoughts that quietly influence how we live.

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